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ABSTRACT

This document describes the installation and evaluation of the Regional Information System within the Michigan-Ohio Regional Educational Laboratory (MOREL). MOREL is an agency established to develop and test alternatives to current educational practice under Title IV of ESEA. The Regional Information System was established to provide referrals to people, projects, and programs as well as to printed materials. Activities of the installation period (April 25, 1968-February 17, 1969) are outlined. The RIS evaluation, including field tests and questionnaires, are summarized. The study concluded that, from the user standpoint, this service is widely desired. Principals, superintendents, and directors and coordinators seem to seek information that will result in decisions, while teachers, consultants, and university personnel seem to be after alternatives and ideas. The evaluation concludes that this particular system is too loosely structured causing ineffectiveness in obtaining information. The major suggestion is to continue this project while trying to coordinate its activities with those of similar systems such as ERIC, ASSIST, and ARIS. (Author/LN)

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MOREL

REGIONAL
INFORMATION
SYSTEM
for educators

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Installation & Evaluation

by Charles Kromer

EA 002 270

MICHIGAN-OHIO
REGIONAL
EDUCATIONAL
LABORATORY

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This document is one of a series describing the background, functions, and utilization of the Regional Information System (RIS) developed by the Michigan-Ohio Regional Educational Laboratory. The series includes:

Information Services — A Survey of the History and Present Status of the Field
Establishing the Information System — An Operational Handbook
A Searcher's Manual of Information Resources
Installation and Evaluation of the RIS

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July, 1969

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Documentation of Installation

Background

The Michigan-Ohio Regional Educational Laboratory (MOREL) was established as an agency to develop and test alternatives to current educational practice. One of 20 regional laboratories operating under Title IV of ESEA, MOREL undertook, among other programs, the development of an information system designed to meet the needs of educators in the region. The MOREL Regional Information System (RIS) provides referrals to people, projects, and programs as well as to printed materials. Its intent is to provide one-stop information service.

Details on the operation of the system may be found in a companion publication, *Establishing the Information System — An Operational Handbook.*

The development of the MOREL RIS progressed to the stage of successful field testing during the summer of 1968. At this point, attention was directed to the possibilities of installations within the region. During the development and field testing phase, potential installation sites were identified with some basic groundwork carried out to determine those which might be most appropriate. A principal criterion for installation was the determination of the ability and interest of an institution in providing the necessary manpower, resources, and attention to the operation of the RIS to assure an effective, long-lasting contribution to education.

This document details the selection and installation procedures used in the installation of the MOREL Regional Information System in the Ohio Education Association (OEA). The chronology highlights the activities of both parties in the installation. Although the formal installation period might be considered as being from September 12, 1968, through February 17, 1969, activities which led to the installation agreement are reviewed as well.

Activities

April 25, 1968

Presentation of MOREL's RIS

Charles Kromer of MOREL met with Charles R. Hilston, Byron Marlowe, and Sandra B. Damico of the OEA in Columbus, Ohio, to review the MOREL RIS development. Emphasis was placed on familiarizing the OEA with our program and soliciting their assistance in the identification and collection of exemplary resources. Two significant points resulted from this initial meeting:

A. Awareness on the part of MOREL of the OEA focused on the valuation of innovative programs in Ohio schools.
B. Expressed willingness on the part of OEA to participate with MOREL in its continuing development and an indication of future interest as an installation site for the RIS.

May 9, 1968

OEA Invites MOREL to Discuss its Program

The Ohio Secondary School Principals, a department of OEA, invited Charles Kromer to present the "MOREL Information Story" at their summer workshop in Columbus. This presentation to roughly 300 principals was held on June 25-27, 1968.

June 17, 1968

MOREL Steps Up Ohio Activities

Frank Halley, MOREL summer field representative, and Charles Kromer met with Byron Marlowe in Columbus to review MOREL summer activities in Ohio and to involve the OEA in resource identification and collection.

Summer, 1968

Ohio Summer Activities

Close contact was maintained by Frank Halley and and Charles Kromer with Byron Marlowe of the OEA, receiving and reviewing suggested programs, projects, and personnel referrals appropriate for the information center. During this time the OEA was finalizing their Frontier Program and again indicated interest in becoming involved with an ongoing activity which would support the initial Frontier Program.

August 14, 1968

OEA Meets with MOREL

Richard Hindman, Director of Research, along with Byron Marlowe and Sandra Damico of the Research Division of the OEA, came to Detroit to discuss the OEA's interest in acquiring the MOREL RIS for Ohio. The OEA recognized the need for providing information of an innovative or exemplary nature to educators of the state, having been involved with the Frontier Program during the past year to address this concern. They saw the MOREL RIS as a natural follow-up to these activities and felt the RIS would complement present services of the association.

The significant result of this meeting was a commitment by Richard Hindman to discuss the program, its costs and personnel requirements, with Dr. Staynor Brighton, Executive Secretary of the OEA.

August 21, 1968

OEA Officially Requests Installation

Staynor Brighton communicated with Dr. Stuart C. Rankin, Executive Director of MOREL, expressing interest in acquiring the MOREL RIS for the OEA. He proposes a meeting in Ohio in early September to develop an installation agreement and installation procedures.

September 12, 1968

MOREL Meets with the OEA

Stuart C. Rankin, William Young, George Grimes, and Charles Kromer met with the OEA in Columbus to discuss a proposed installation agreement. General agreement was reached and directions for completing an installation schedule were given. Formal acceptance by the respective governing boards of MOREL and the OEA would be sought at their next meeting. Plans for a joint news release were made.

October 7-8, 1968

Establishment of an Installation Schedule

Richard Hindman of the OEA came to Detroit to finalize the installation schedule with Charles Kromer of MOREL. Ada Jean Lowe, librarian with the OEA, met in Detroit with James Doyle and Leo Pickett, MOREL librarians, to review the nature of the library component of the MOREL RIS.

October 10, 1968

Adaptation of the RIS Emerges

Byron Marlowe proposed new equipment, Access 60, as an alternative to the McBee equipment used by MOREL. Mutual investigation by MOREL and the OEA was undertaken immediately to determine the feasibility of this equipment in the system.

October 11, 1968

MOREL Board Grants Approval

Stuart C. Rankin indicated to Staynor Brighton that the MOREL Board of Directors were pleased about the proposed installation and requested formal acceptance of the agreement by the OEA.

October 15-16, 1968

Acceptance of Access 60 Retrieval System

Byron Marlowe met in Detroit to review the potential of the proposed Access 60 equipment. Mutual agreement on this equipment was made by Byron Marlowe and Charles Kromer and initiation of the development of a coding scheme compatible with this equipment was undertaken. Byron Marlowe assumed the responsibility for the coding scheme development with review and support provided by Charles Kromer.

October 23, 1968

OEA Formally Accepts Installation Agreement

Staynor Brighton confirmed in a letter to Stuart C. Rankin the acceptance of the installation agreement by the OEA Executive Committee.

November 1, 1968

Preliminary Approval of Coding Scheme

Byron Marlowe and Charles Kromer met in Bowling Green, Ohio, to review the proposed coding scheme. Concurrence was reached on the format, descriptors, and numerical code.

November, 1968

Installation Transition Activities

MOREL made available to the OEA all forms, cover letters, and procedures utilized in the operation of the MOREL RIS. The OEA spent this time reviewing these and converting them to their own needs. Printing of the finalized forms, letters, and procedures was scheduled for December and January.

December 19, 1968

Training for OEA Personnel

Charles Kromer, James Doyle, and Leo Pickett went to Columbus to work with the personnel responsible for operating the OEA Information Center. Charles Kromer met with the Field staff of the OEA to review with them their responsibilities in identifying and collecting resources. Areas such as sources, quality, needs, etc. were covered.

James Doyle and Leo Pickett met with Ada Jean Lowe to review the progress being made in establishing the library component of the OEA Information Center. Emphasis was placed on library content, facilities, and staff.

January 6, 1969

Printing Completed

The OEA sent copies of forms, letters, and coding schemes to MOREL.

January 8, 1969

Preliminary Evaluation of Installation to Date

MOREL issued a progress report on the installation. Specific points were made with general agreement that the installation was progressing on schedule.

January 28, 1969

MOREL Notifies Ohio Resources

MOREL contacted all previously identified resources in Ohio which had been collected for the MOREL RIS and informed them of the transfer of their activities to the OEA. Each resource was supplied with OEA data forms and coding scheme to facilitate their transferring to the OEA Information Center.

January, 1969

OEA Seeks Resources

An initial mass mailing was made to educators in Ohio, explaining the operation of the OEA's Information System titled "Association Referral Information Service" (ARIS). At the same time, each educator was asked to suggest exemplary people and programs familiar to them.

February, 1969

Completion of Transfer

MOREL sent files containing information on resources in Ohio identified by MOREL to the OEA. In addition, selected articles, abstracts, and bibliographies were sent for inclusion in the library component of the ARIS.

February 17, 1969

Installation Completed — Service Begins

The OEA had identified and compiled roughly 2000 resources from the state of Ohio. Through public relations efforts, service was announced and requests were processed from educators throughout the state. Requests received by MOREL from Ohio were referred to the OEA for processing.

Installation Costs & Staff Requirements

Certain questions relating to costs may have come to mind during the review of the activities involved in installing the RIS.

Initially it should be made clear that there is no direct cost or purchase involved in obtaining the right to use the RIS. Having been developed with federal funds for the purpose of providing tested alternatives to current educational practice the developed models are available at no cost. Should any equipment, materials, manpower, or facilities be required, this cost will be borne by the institution serving as the installation. MOREL, having developed the RIS, provided consultant services at no cost to the acquiring institution. MOREL assumed any transportation, food, and lodging costs incurred during the installation phase. Likewise the OEA bore the expenses of sending any of their personnel to MOREL during the installation phase. In addition, the OEA assumed the cost of obtaining the Access 60 equipment and additional expenses incurred in the revision and adaptation of the MOREL forms and procedures to their own system.

It has not been the intent of this document to present precise details or cost factors as might be related to the installation of the MOREL RIS in the OEA. Rather, our intent is to provide an overall frame of reference so that anyone interested in obtaining a basic understanding of the installation procedure could do so without having to piece the process together from unrelated sources. Certainly more specific details could be obtained by referring to either party, depending on the specific nature of your concern.

Table 1.

USER EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

	Overall System Rating (adequate to excellent)	Classroom Needs	School or Department Needs	Professional Growth	Complete Original Pursuit	Suggest New Pursuit	Re-evaluate Direction of Original Pursuit	Decision-making		Aware of Other One-stop Systems	Example of One-stop Systems Known	Previous Sources of Information			Type of Resource Utilized
								Yes	No			People Contacted	Programs Contacted	Printed Material Read	
Teacher N=13	10 76.9	3 23.1	5 38.5	7 53.8	8 61.5	3 23.1	0 0	2 15.4	4 30.1	9 69.2	ERIC State Dept.	Library Int. District	2 15.4	2 15.4	11 84.6	
Principal N=38	33 86.8	3 7.9	31 81.6	7 18.4	8 21.1	18 47.4	4 10.5	22 57.9	13 34.2	21 55.3	ERIC ASSIST ARIS Reg. Lab University	Library Colleague University State Dept. ASSIST ARIS ERIC Int. District	11 28.9	18 47.4	23 60.5	
Superintendent N=9	7 77.8	0 0	8 88.9	1 11.1	2 22.2	1 11.1	2 22.2	5 55.6	4 44.4	4 44.4	ERIC Croft Service Reg. Lab R&D Center ARIS ASSIST	State Dept. AASA ASCD ERIC University Reg. Lab	4 44.4	4 44.4	3 33.3	
Public School Director N=38	28 73.7	2 5.3	35 92.1	6 15.8	12 31.6	14 36.8	10 26.3	19 50.0	15 39.5	21 55.3	ERIC ARIS ASSIST University SRIS SMI Reg. Lab	Library University Colleague ERIC State Dept. Int. District ASSIST ARIS	8 21.1	18 47.4	19 50.0	
County or Inter. Consultant N=22	15 68.2	1 4.5	15 68.2	7 31.8	12 54.5	5 22.7	2 9.1	10 45.5	15 68.2	6 27.3	ERIC ARIS ASSIST Int. District	State Dept. University Colleague ERIC ASSIST ARIS	3 13.6	7 31.8	13 59.1	
University N=17	16 94.1	1 5.9	9 52.9	7 41.2	5 29.4	5 29.4	0 0	4 23.5	5 29.4	11 64.7	ERIC Reg. Lab ASSIST SRIS	Library ASCD USOE NEA ARIS ERIC	2 11.8	2 11.8	13 76.5	
Other N=8	7 87.5	0 0	4 50.0	3 37.5	4 50.0	1 12.5	1 12.5	1 12.5	2 25.0	6 75.0	ERIC ASSIST	Library Reg. Lab	0 0	2 25.0	4 50.0	

Evaluation of the Regional Information System

Background

Early in 1967, the Michigan-Ohio Regional Educational Laboratory (MOREL) in addressing one of the major expressed needs of the region, undertook the development of an information system. The system's design was such that it permitted educators in the region to present questions on a wide variety of subjects and interest areas and receive referrals to programs, projects, people, and printed materials. These referrals represented alternatives for the requester of information as he pursued solutions to his problems and concerns. A great deal more could be said about the specifics of the information system's operation but, as the purpose of this document is to report the results of the evaluation study, reference will be made to a companion document which presents the operational aspects of the MOREL Regional Information System (RIS) in greater detail. This document is titled, *Establishing the Information System — An Operational Handbook.*

Procedures

In undertaking an evaluation of the MOREL RIS, the intent was to determine whether the educators were able to receive, from the RIS, information that would be helpful to them. A detailed study of the ultimate use of the information was not undertaken, nor was the RIS compared directly to other existing information sources or systems. Rather, each requester was asked to give his candid impressions of the RIS in terms of his reasons for the request, the use of the information, his previous knowledge and use of information sources and systems, and his general rating of the services provided through the MOREL RIS. Since the RIS focuses on providing various types of referrals, i.e., people, programs, and printed materials, the evaluation sought the utilization of these various types of information and their value to the requester. The evaluation instrument used in the study is found in the Appendix.

Limitations

The activities of MOREL are developmental in nature. Thus, with regard to the Regional Information System's operation, the services provided were to facilitate the field testing of the developed model. Consequently the nature of the limited exposure of educators to this service will qualify the results reported later in this presentation. They will, however, include sufficient data from which conclusions can be drawn.

Sample

During the field testing phase in 1968, service was offered to 302 requests, represented by 218 individual requests. Multiple requests and general informational requests about MOREL's program accounts for the difference. The User Evaluation Questionnaire was sent to all requesters, with 145 being completed and returned. The results were analyzed and comparisons made according to the role of the requester. The tabulation of the data is presented in Table 1. N in each case represents the total number in that particular role classification responding to the instrument. In each box, the number in the upper left corner represents the number out of the total N for that role that checked that category. The number in the lower right corner indicates the percentage response.

Analysis

The category, "Overall System Rating," provided each requester a 7 point response. The percentages indicated in column 1 represent the average or adequate rating through the excellent rating. Viewing the average of all roles, it appears that roughly 8 out of each 10 requesters were satisfied with the services provided by the RIS.

The next 3 categories, "Classroom, School, and Professional Growth Needs," were designed to permit the requester to specify his reason for seeking information. Here we begin to note some differentiation between the roles and their reason for seeking information. Principals, superintendents, and the director-coordinator level in the public elementary and secondary school seem to be concerned principally with school needs, while the teacher, consultant, and university roles lean more toward their own professional growth than the others.

The categories of, "Completing, Suggesting, and Re-evaluating Pursuits" along with "Decision-Making" represent choices for the requester in terms of the use

to which he put the information. Here again we see the roles of principal, superintendent, and director-coordinator as primarily concerned with a decision-making orientation while the other roles of county consultant, university, and teacher are increasingly less concerned with decisions. It is also important to note that on an average for all roles, roughly 25% of the time the information provided was able to suggest new pursuits.

The next set of categories relate to the requesters' knowledge of similar information systems and his previous sources of information. The county consultant level seems to be more aware of what is "happening" than other roles. Again the average of the roles would indicate lack of knowledge of existing systems similar to the MOREL RIS. Of the examples of known systems, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Association Referral Information Service (ARIS), and Activities to Support and Stimulate Innovations in Schools Today (ASSIST) were frequently mentioned. Two of these, ARIS and ASSIST, have been patterned after the MOREL RIS to a large degree and represent evidence of independent operational installations of the MOREL concept of information systems. ERIC, of course, is a vital part of the printed material referrals in the RIS.

Previous sources of information were about as expected with individual library work, intermediate or county districts, colleagues, state departments and universities being utilized. Several references to recently created information systems such as ARIS and ASSIST were mentioned along with ERIC, Regional Labs and R & D Centers. The interesting point here is that each role seems to view the county or intermediate district as a vital role for providing information. This may have implications in terms of the location of information systems within each state.

The last 3 categories, "People and Program Contacted and Printed Materials Read," review the actual followup by the requester to the various types of information supplied. Principals, superintendents, directors-coordinators, and county or intermediate consultants seem interested in visiting existing programs as a means of becoming aware of what's "happening". This may be affected by their ability to be more mobile than the teacher role. Very little total interest was expressed in seeking contact with individuals by any role. This may be accounted for by a potential cost factor and scheduling problem.

Summary & Conclusion

While a study of this type has limitations, certain generalizations seem to emerge from the data.

Initially it would appear that all roles are anxious for a more comprehensive one-stop service to emerge. Indications are that the model of the MOREL RIS might be a start in that direction. Following closely is the need for various types of information, both in form (i.e., people, programs and print) and in degree of difficulty or involvement. Information seems to be needed that can not only address specific concerns, when so stated, but also suggest direction to the more vague request. Certain roles, such as principals, superintendents, and directors-coordinators, seem to seek information that will result in closure and decisions, while teachers, consultants, and university roles seem to be after alternatives and ideas.

Present methods and sources of information services are loosely structured if structured at all. This results in a very ineffective procedure for obtaining information and often is a cause for lack of action. The role of the intermediate or county office seems to be emerging as the focal point for educational improvement and would appear to be the likely place to begin formalizing the transfer of information in a more meaningful way. Certainly, the concept of information has broadened from its previous scope (the written word) and now includes all forms of written communications (research reports, project descriptions, abstracts, bibliographies, etc.) as well as informational referrals to noted and competent teachers, administrators, and consultants at the county, state, and university level for the many exemplary projects and programs in existence today.

The Future

What does the future hold for the implications drawn from this study? Where do we go from here? One suggestion would be to continue the work that has been started in the area of knowledge utilization. This should be continued and utilized in the study of systems such as ERIC, ASSIST, ARIS, and the many "systems" evolving today. Effort must be made to coordinate the activities of these "systems" to assure maximum concentration of money and effort for maximum productivity. The federal government has been involved in initiating many of these systems and must now take the initiative in seeing that the most effective ones are continued and incorporated into a meaningful network.

Appendix

User Evaluation Questionnaires

MOREL INFORMATION CENTER

(Please respond to all questions)

Title or position _____ Name (optional)_____

1. Which of the following best describes the reason for your request? (More than one choice permitted)

_____Classroom needs as I deal daily with students
_____School or department working on educational improvement in the area of my request
_____Professional growth (writing, reading, or further schooling) necessitated additional information
_____Interest as a result of attending a meeting, conference, etc.
_____Other (specify) _____

2. Which of the following best describes how you used the information received as a result of your request? (More than one choice permitted)

_____to complete the original pursuit
_____to investigate new pursuits it suggested
_____to re-evaluate the direction of the original pursuit
_____to assist in decision-making about educational practices
_____other (specify) _____

3. One of the objectives of the MOREL Information Center is to provide "one-stop" service where referrals to programs, printed materials, and consultants are available from one source.

   a. Are you familiar with <u>other</u> institutions, individuals, or agencies which could provide this "one-stop" service?

      Yes_____ No_____ (If yes, please indicate the name(s)

   b. From what source(s) did you obtain information prior to your using the MOREL Information Center?

4. How would you rate the services provided by the MOREL Information Center?

/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/
excellent adequate unnecessary

5. What activities would you suggest we

   a. Start?

   b. stop?

   c. continue?

RESOURCE BANK
USER EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

A. Resource People

1. Regarding the resource people referred to you, did you review the background information supplied?

_____completely
_____somewhat
_____not at all
_____none provided

2. Did you contact or engage any of the resource people?

_____Yes (specify) _____contacted _____engaged
_____No

3. How would you rate the contribution of those resource people you contacted or engaged?

_____provided many new ideas
_____provided some new ideas
_____provided very little that was new
_____reinforced present thinking
_____irrelevant
_____other (specify) _____

B. Projects & Programs

4. Regarding the projects and programs referred to you, did you review the background information supplied.

_____completely
_____somewhat
_____not at all
_____none provided

5. Did you write, telephone, or visit a project or program?

_____Yes (specify) _____Mail _____Telephone _____Visitation
_____No

6. How would you rate the contribution of the project or program you wrote to, telephoned, or visited?

_____provided many new ideas
_____provided some new ideas
_____provided very little that was new
_____reinforced present thinking
_____irrelevant
_____other (specify) _____

REFERRAL LIBRARY
USER EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Regarding the printed materials (bibliographies, articles, etc.) sent to you, were they

   a. read?

   /_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/
   extensively in part not at all

   b. relevant to your needs?

   /_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/
   highly adequately not at all

2. Concerning the referrals to other agencies for additional information, were they contacted?

   ____Yes
   ____No
   ____No referrals given

3. If agencies to which MOREL referred you <u>were</u> contacted, to what extent were they able to assist you?

   /_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/
   extensively somewhat not at all

4. If agencies to which MOREL referred you <u>were not</u> contacted, why did you not contact them?